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125 124 knew as a rule what information I wanted. On an appointed day I went to the village in the early morning. My first task was to make a rough sketch of the position of the huts and to number them. Then with the aid of some of the men of the village (who were usually the workers of seventy-groups) I went from hut to hut completing a Rhodes-Livingstone Institute standard census form for each adult person who lived in the hut. Later I found that if I completed the census forms for certain key personalities who were dead, I could sometimes construct most of the genealogy of the village without having to question the headmen any further. More commonly, however, especially in the larger and more complex villages, I found that it was necessary for me to meet the headmen and some of the older men afterwards to complete the genealogy of the village. When I did this it was customary for the men of the village to gather in the common shelter or around me under the verandah of the hut where I was working. The women were not invited now, at least at the beginning of the interview. Soon, however, the men became more and more confused. At some stage or other they would begin shouting questions over to the women, who were sitting discreetly under the verandah of an adjoining hut or in the shade of a conveniently close tree, from where they could hear the proceedings. Eventually, almost without fail, the older women were brought closer and the difficulties straightened out. In time I became accustomed to this procedure and accepted the fact that the first genealogy would have to be discarded and a second made later with the help of the women.

126 It was during the house-to-house census that many valuable leads emerged. During the census-taking, for example, several types of marriage with kinsmen appeared which I was able to follow up immediately in terms of an actual case history; or, if it were likely to be embarrassing at that moment, I noted it down and made specific enquiries later, for the census-taking was usually done in public.

127 124 The quantitative material presented in Chapter IV on Prestige and Rank among Village Headmen was collected at the chief's courts. I worked with the chief's tax-clerk and one or two of the chief's councillors. We worked through the tax-register, and the councillors answered a set of questions about each village headman. In two areas the chiefs called the village head-

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men into a public meeting and each answered the questions personally. Where the information was not known, I made special enquiries to obtain it. Later I transferred this information on to small cards which I subsequently used in the statistical analysis. During my survey of Malemia chiefdom I was able to employ six African clerks whom I trained to record genealogies. They surveyed a 20 per cent random sample of villages in the chiefdom. The material from these genealogies has been transferred to Hollerith cards for statistical analysis at some future date. During this period, Mr. Carrall Wilcocks, who was then Agricultural Instructor at the Jeanes' School, and I were able to make a map with chain and compass of every garden cultivated by members of a large village. While the general results of this study have been included here, a detailed analysis is still to be made.

The material used in the chapters which deal with the pre-White times has been derived mainly from the published works quoted in the Bibliography. I was also able to consult records in the Central African Archives. By permission of the Nyasaland Government I was allowed to read through the District Books at Fort Johnston and Zomba, and through some of the files which contained information collected by early District Officers. I was also able to consult the detailed returns of the 1945 Census at the District Commissioner's office in Zomba. The Agricultural Officer at Fort Johnston, under whose jurisdiction the area where I was working fell, was kind enough to let me read some reports and to give me statistics of sales of tobacco and other agricultural produce at the Government-controlled markets, as well as details of rainfall and temperature.

The ideas in this book have been developed in a number of Rhodes-Livingstone Institute staff conferences and at seminars at Oxford. During a preliminary period of writing at Oxford between September 1947 and August 1948 I prepared the manuscript of what was later to become my contribution to the symposium *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this essay in setting the problems examined in this book and in clarifying my approach to them. It brought home to me more than anything else the truth in the aphorism: *the hardest part of field work is writing it up.*